

The Macomb Daily

Mount Clemens to put extra surveillance cameras Downtown



Macomb Daily staff photo by Craig Gaffield

Dispatch supervisor Laura Peeples displays a surveillance image of the Roskopp lot in downtown Mt. Clemens.

By Frank DeFrank
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The skies are about to have more eyes in The Clem.

The Macomb County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with the county roads department and Mount Clemens city officials, will soon install as many as eight more security cameras in and around the downtown area to aid police in patrolling the city.

The new installations will build on the concept of enhanced security initiated two years ago when two cameras were installed in a city parking lot that had been the scene of several fights.

Eight new cameras will be scattered throughout the city and provide dispatchers located at the sheriff's department on Elizabeth Road a clear view if problems develop.

"Normally, the information (dispatchers) receive is from the caller," said Anthony Wickersham, Macomb County sheriff. "With the installation of these cameras, we'll be able to zoom right on in and get real-time information and provide it to our deputies. (The information enhances) safety for them and for the community."

Wickersham announced the expanded video security program during a recent taping of "Executive Focus," a new cable television program hosted by county Executive Mark Hackel.

The cameras are similar to those the Macomb County Department of Roads installs at many intersections. In fact, road officials will perform the installations for the sheriff.

Unlike the intersection cameras, which help monitor traffic flow, the security cameras will have the ability to record. That could come in handy for police in the event of criminal prosecutions, Wickersham said.

Mount Clemens Mayor Barb Dempsey said she feared some residents would object when the initial two cameras were installed.

“We thought there would be a major outcry,” she said. “Big Brother is watching us, that kind of thing.”

Those concerns never materialized, the mayor said. She believes the installation of the eight new cameras will help make Mount Clemens one of the safest communities in Macomb County.

“It’s not unsafe now,” Dempsey said. “We have such a large entertainment venue and we have such a variety of ages who come downtown, I just think (visitors) need to have a comfort level.”

Wickersham also tried to allay concerns that police will use the cameras to fill their coffers with money from fines.

“It’s not if you run a red light we’re going to send you a ticket,” he said. “We can’t do that (by law).”

Installation of the eight new cameras will cost about \$120,000, but neither the city nor county will feel the financial pinch. Proceeds from the sheriff’s department forfeiture account will pay the costs.

“We’re using drug forfeiture money to enhance the security in that area,” Wickersham said. “No taxpayers’ money is going to be used on this project.”

The new cameras are expected to be installed over the next few weeks.